

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 9, 2018

Agenda Item: HD 214 Elk B license adjustment

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

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Background: FWP proposes to change the area valid for Elk B-license 002-00 in HD 214 from private lands district-wide to “only valid west of Storm Lake Road and Storm Lake Trail.” This change would go into effect immediately upon commission approval to prevent the possible overlap of rifle hunters and bowhunters on private lands that are leased for open recreation by Anaconda-Deer Lodge County.

In 2018, Region 2 recommended, and the commission approved, the use of the regional Elk B license 002-00 in multiple hunting districts for the 2018-2019 hunting seasons, including HD 214, south of Anaconda. FWP’s recommendation for including HD 214 was to address chronic elk damage, which occurs in the western part of the district, south of Philipsburg. However, it was an accidental oversight on the part of Region 2 to include private lands across all of HD 214, which includes winter range adjacent to the Garrity Mountain WMA. Overharvest of elk that are not causing game damage could occur in the eastern portion of HD 214 on a large block of private land administered for public recreation by Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, and on any number of neighboring private lands with access circumstances that could result in excessive antlerless harvest.

The objective of this change is to correct a mistake in the prescription of the 002-00 Elk B license:

- To protect a vulnerable segment of the elk population from overharvest
- To direct available hunting pressure to the correct portion of HD 214.

Additionally, as information only and requiring no commission action, FWP will clarify regulations for use of the 002-00 Elk B license during Oct. 20 – Feb 15 for HDs 210, 211, 212, 215 and 216 to include DNRC lands outside USFS and FWP WMA boundaries, and the Prison Ranch in HD 212 with permission. The regulations will read:

- Aug 15 – Oct 19 – Antlerless Elk. Only valid on the above-described private lands.
- Oct 20 - Feb 15 - Antlerless Elk. Valid on the above-described private lands AND ALSO VALID on DNRC lands outside National Forest boundary and outside the boundaries of FWP WMAs. *[Additional note for HD 212]* - In HD 212, ALSO valid on Montana State Prison Ranch, in compliance with Prison Ranch access regulations.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The proposed change for HD 214 was brought to FWP’s attention by the Anaconda Sportsmen’s Club, and the club and the county stand ready to assist with outreach and signage to inform the public of this change, if enacted.

Alternatives and Analysis: If the proposed adjustment is not adopted, there is the potential to overharvest local elk.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission approve adjusting the 002-00 Elk B license in HD 214 only valid west of Storm Lake Road and Storm Lake Trail.

Proposed Motion:

I move the commission approve making the 002-00 Elk B license in HD 214 only valid west of Storm Lake Road and Storm Lake Trail for the 2018 season.